

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM**

NR Eligible: yes ☐
no ☐

Property Name: "First Telegram" Marker Inventory Number: PG 62-009
Address: Baltimore Avenue (US 1) North of Ritz Way Historic district: ☐ yes ☒ no
City: Beltsville Zip Code: 20705 County: Prince Georges
USGS Quadrangle(s): Beltsville
Property Owner: State Roads Commission Tax Account ID Number: _____
Tax Map Parcel Number(s): 14 Tax Map Number: 13
Project: US 1/ MD 201:Cherrywood Lane to North of Contee Road Agency: SHA
Agency Prepared By: EHT Traceries, Inc.
Preparer's Name: Christina Hiatt Date Prepared: 1/9/2008
Documentation is presented in: _____
Preparer's Eligibility Recommendation: ☐ Eligibility recommended ☒ Eligibility not recommended
Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D Considerations: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G
Complete if the property is a contributing or non-contributing resource to a NR district/property:
Name of the District/Property: _____
Inventory Number: _____ Eligible: ☐ yes Listed: ☐ yes
Site visit by MHT Staff ☐ yes ☒ no Name: _____ Date: _____

Description of Property and Justification: *(Please attach map and photo)*

The "First Telegram" Marker is situated to the west of Baltimore Avenue (US 1), just north of the Ritz Way intersection, on the way from Beltsville to Laurel, in Prince George's County Maryland. To the west are railroad tracks, and although the immediate area is undeveloped, there are commercial and industrial properties nearby. The metal sign, standing approximately 6 feet high, is supported by a metal post, and was commissioned by the Maryland Historic Trust and Maryland State Highway Administration to honor the first successful telegram message. The sign notes that "The first telegram 'What hath God Wrought' was sent from the Capitol in Washington to Baltimore May 24, 1844 over wires laid along the right of way of the B & O Railroad adjacent to this highway. The telegram was invented by Samuel F.B. Morse (1791-1872)."

The development and history of the area around U.S. Route 1, which travels north from Beltsville to Laurel in Prince George's County, Maryland, has been strongly influenced by its use as a major transportation corridor. Today, Route 1, also known as Baltimore Avenue (formerly Washington and Baltimore Turnpike, established 1812), is bounded by commercial properties, many of which are automobile-oriented businesses dating from the early to mid-twentieth century. Nearby thoroughfares such as Old Baltimore Pike, Edmonston Road, and Maryland Avenue have a mix of commercial and industrial sites. The edges of minor roads such as Old Muirkirk and Cochran Roads are predominately developed by freestanding single-family dwellings dating from the

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW

Eligibility recommended ☐ Eligibility not recommended ☐
Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D Considerations: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

MHT Comments: *Inventory update. The Maryland Historical Trust does not assess the National Register eligibility of its historical markers.*

Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services

Date

Reviewer, National Register Program

Date

200801746

first part of the twentieth century. It was not until after World War II that intensive development came to the area along Route 1. With increased federal employment, rise in personal automobile ownership, and construction of Interstate 95, development along Route 1 and surrounding area continued through the 1960s.(1)

Although commemorating a significant historical event, the "First Telegram" Marker that is situated along U.S. Route 1 is not individually associated with the events and trends that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, thus disqualifying it for eligibility under Criterion A. The sign is not associated with any person or group of persons of outstanding importance to the community, state, or nation. Therefore, the marker is not eligible under Criterion B. The sign does possess integrity because it retains its original design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, association, and location. Although this sign is an example of a historic marker commissioned by the Maryland Historic Trust and Maryland State Highway Administration, it is a common sign found in Prince George's County. This example is not significant as it does not represent the work of a master or possess high artistic value. It is thus disqualified for eligibility under Criterion C. The "First Telegram" Marker was not evaluated under Criterion D. Therefore, it has been recommended that The "First Telegram" Marker that is situated along U.S. Route 1 is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A, B, and C.

1) Susan G. Pearl, "History of Route 1 Corridor, 1740-1990," in Historic Contexts in Prince George's County: Short Papers on Settlement Patterns, Transportation and Cultural History (Upper Marlboro, MD: Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, 1991), 30.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW

Eligibility recommended _____

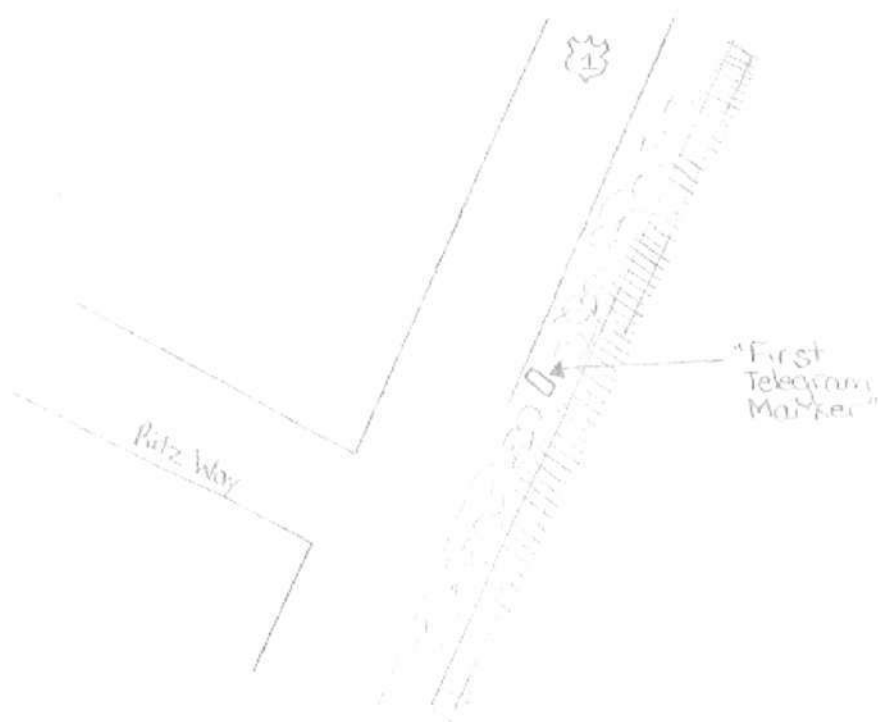
Eligibility not recommended _____

Criteria: ___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D Considerations: ___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D ___ E ___ F ___ G

MHT Comments:

Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services_____
Date_____
Reviewer, National Register Program_____
Date

RESOURCE SKETCH MAP



N
↑

| | | | |
|---------------------|------------|----------|--------------------------------------|
| ID#: | PG: 62-009 | Name: | "First Telegram Marker" |
| Town/Town Vicinity: | Cattsville | Address: | Baltimore Avenue, Northwest Ritz Way |
| | | County: | Prince Georges |



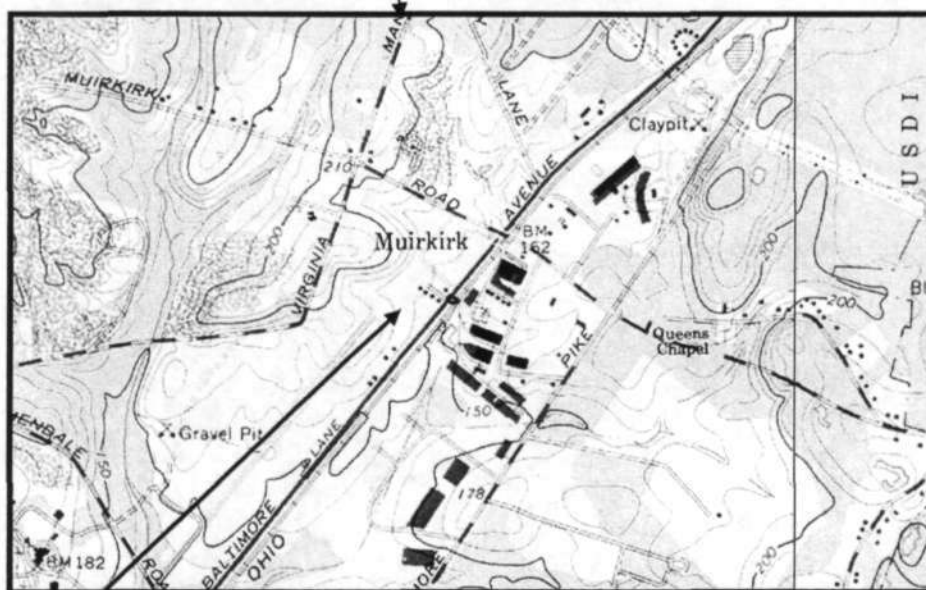
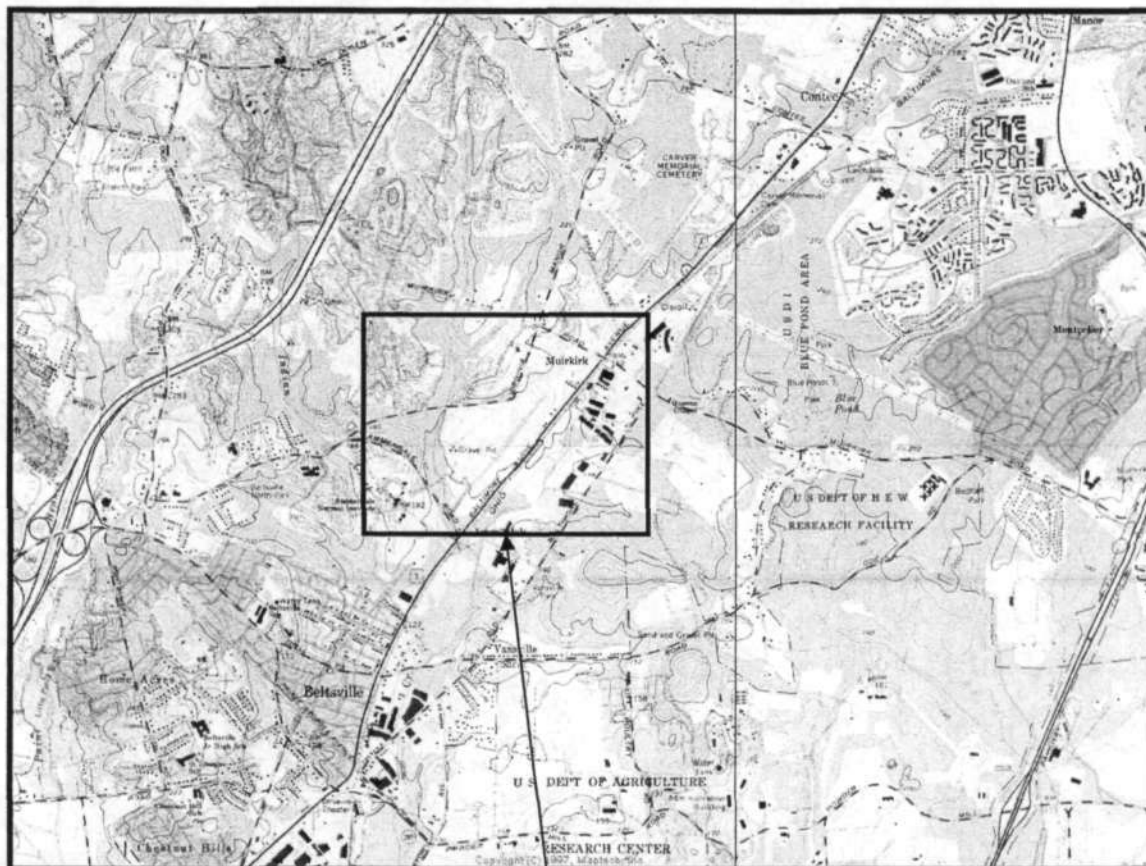
“First Telegram” Marker on Baltimore Avenue, North of Ritz Way (62-009)

Beltsville, Prince George’s County, MD

Tax Parcel Map 13, Parcel 14

Prepared by EHT Tracerics, Inc., 2008





"First Telegram" Marker on Baltimore Avenue, North of Ritz Way (62-009)

Beltsville, Prince George's County, MD

Beltsville Quad, USGS Topographic Map, 1964, Revised 1979

Prepared by EHT Tracerics, Inc., 2008



MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

PG: #62-9

P.431

1700314434

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

"First Telegraph" Marker

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Rte. 1, along RR tracks

CITY, TOWN

Muirkirk (Beltsville) VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Prince George's

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- ☐ DISTRICT
- ☐ BUILDING(S)
- ☒ STRUCTURE
- ☐ SITE
- ☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- ☒ PUBLIC
- ☐ PRIVATE
- ☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

- ☐ IN PROCESS
- ☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- ☐ OCCUPIED
- ☐ UNOCCUPIED
- ☐ WORK IN PROGRESS
- ☒ ACCESSIBLE
- ☐ YES: RESTRICTED
- ☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED
- ☐ NO

PRESENT USE

- ☐ AGRICULTURE
- ☐ MUSEUM
- ☐ COMMERCIAL
- ☐ PARK
- ☐ EDUCATIONAL
- ☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ☐ ENTERTAINMENT
- ☐ RELIGIOUS
- ☐ GOVERNMENT
- ☐ SCIENTIFIC
- ☐ INDUSTRIAL
- ☐ TRANSPORTATION
- ☐ MILITARY
- ☒ OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

(roadside mrkr.)

NAME

State Roads Commission (right-of-way) Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Liber #:

Folio #:

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Prince George's County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Upper Marlboro

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION**CONDITION**

☐ EXCELLENT
☐ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☐ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This is a metal sign placed beside the road, that gives the background of the first successful telegraph message sent along this route in 1844.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD | | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW | | | |
|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> ART | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION | | | |

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Samuel F.B. Morse erected a telegraph line along the B & O RR right-of-way in 1844. He sent his famous "What hath God wrought" message over these wires in that same year. He was aided in his endeavors by Ezra Cornell, founder of Cornell University, and Charles B. Calvert of "Riversdale".

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- 1) ASPECTS OF THE HISTORY OF MD. & P.G. CO., (1967), pp. 90-93,
Prince George's Co. Board of Education.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Michael F. Dwyer, Senior Park Historian

ORGANIZATION

M-NCPPC

DATE

1/30/73

STREET & NUMBER

8787 Georgia Ave.

TELEPHONE

589-1480

CITY OR TOWN

Silver Spring

STATE

Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438



THE FIRST TELEGRAM
"WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT"

WAS SENT FROM THE CAPITOL IN
WASHINGTON TO BALTIMORE MAY 24,
1844 OVER WIRES LAID ALONG THE
RIGHT OF WAY OF THE B&O RAILROAD
ADJACENT TO THIS HIGHWAY. THE
TELEGRAPH WAS INVENTED BY
SAMUEL F.B. MORSE (1791-1872).

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
MARYLAND STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

PG 62-009

"First Telegram" Marker
Baltimore Avenue (US1)

Prince George's County, Maryland
EHT Traceries, Inc.

January 2008

MD SHPC

Sign, looking south

#1 of 2



THE FIRST TELEGRAM
"WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT"

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WASHINGTON TO BALTIMORE MAY 24,
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MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
MARYLAND STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

PG 62-009

"First Telegram" Marker
Baltimore Avenue (US1)

Prince George's County, Maryland

EHT Traceries, Inc.

January, 2008

MO SHPO

Sign, looking north

#2 of 2